

TOP SECRET

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3 April 1954

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Copy No. 76

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

DOCUMENT NO. 20
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2009
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 28/12/79 REVIEWER: A rectangular redaction box.

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Office of Current Intelligence

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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DOS review(s) completed.

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1.

FAR EAST

2. Peiping maintains pressure for farm collectivization:

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The spring cultivation directive issued on 31 March by Peiping's Government Administration Council informed rural officials

that "agricultural production and mutual aid and cooperation are a whole task which is unified and cannot be separated. They are the center of all work in the rural areas."

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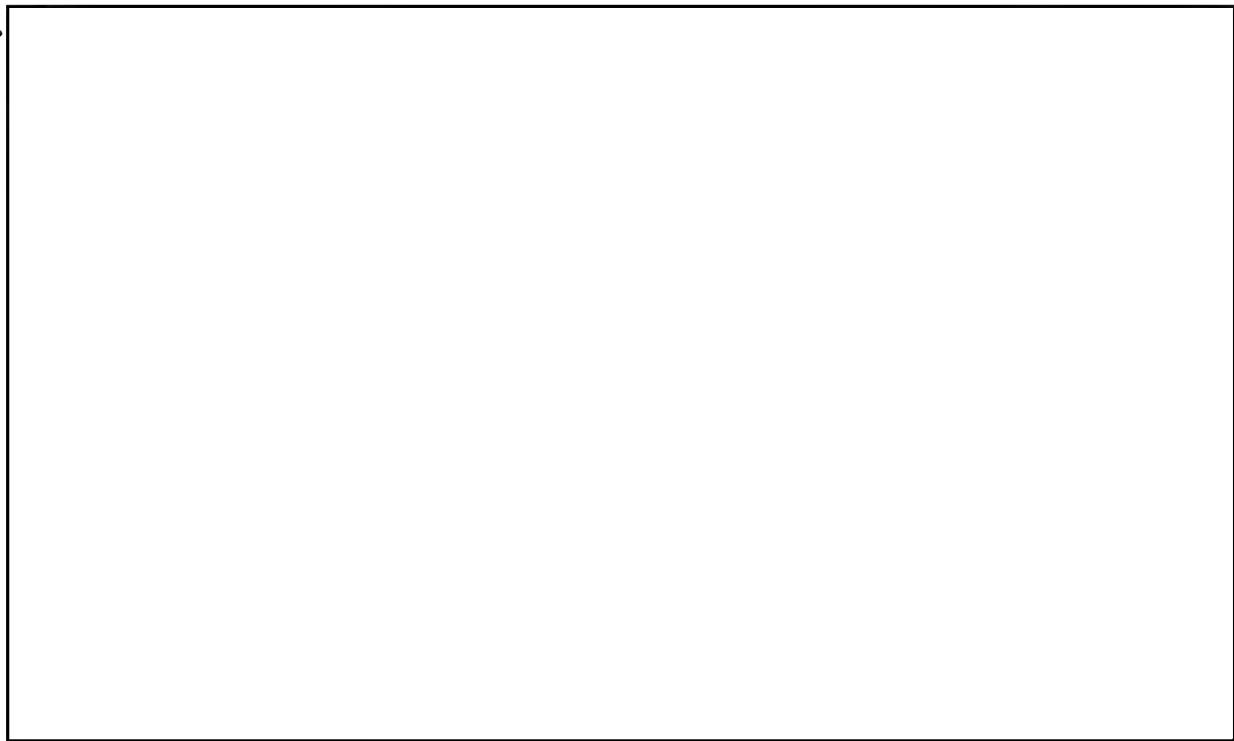
Comment: The spring cultivation directive is a statement of the Peiping regime's basic agricultural policy. In previous years Peiping recognized the unfavorable effects of socialization programs on agricultural production and discontinued such activities in rural areas before spring. Last year, for example, the annual directive on spring cultivation called encouragement of output "the central task which supersedes all other tasks," and instructed cadres to postpone or cancel other work which might obstruct spring cultivation.

The continued formation of mutual aid teams and farm producers' cooperatives through the growing season was unexpected and reflects the speed of Peiping's movement toward a controlled economy. [redacted]

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

4. Reinforcements deemed essential to hold Dien Bien Phu:

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Colonel de Castries said on 2 April that he could guarantee the defense of Dien Bien Phu with three more battalions. He added that a minimum of two reinforcing battalions is essential to prevent its loss, according to Ambassador Heath in Saigon.

Heath reports, however, that bad flying weather and heavy enemy attacks halted an attempted reinforcement on 1 April after only 50 men were dropped. Again, as on the previous day, half of the ammunition drop fell into enemy hands. The French estimated on 2 April that Dien Bien Phu's garrison had only enough ammunition at current rates of fire to last until the morning of 3 April.

Meanwhile, the American consulate at Hanoi reports French intelligence opinion that enemy attacks are losing force, possibly owing to personnel losses, fatigue and depletion of ammunition. If Dien Bien Phu can hold out through the night of 3 April, French intelligence believes "there is a chance that the situation may ease."

5. Comment on Viet Minh incursion into Cambodia:

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The incursion into Cambodia by Viet Minh regular elements reported on 1 April apparently was undertaken by troops drawn from a force of four battalions operating in southern Laos. Elements which have crossed the border are believed to number about 600 and present no real military threat, although they may achieve some local successes.

This thrust is the first open penetration of Cambodia by the Viet Minh and augments the scattered force of 1,000 infiltrated regulars already active there. The Viet Minh has in addition some 6,500 regional troops and militia in Cambodia.

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The move may signify a Communist intent to strengthen the claim to legitimacy of the "Free Cambodia" government in connection with the Geneva conference. The Viet Minh probably also wishes to make a further show of military prowess prior to the conference in order to improve the Communists' bargaining position.

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

6. Arab states organizing campaign against American aid to Israel:

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On 2 April the American press reported that Jordan was considering the possibility of terminating its Point IV agreement and notifying Eric Johnston not to return to the area to discuss the Jordan Valley plan.

On 1 April Ambassador Moose in Damascus reported that Syrian defense minister Dawalibi spent two hours with him bitterly criticizing aid to Israel. Moose believes that Dawalibi, notably pro-Soviet in the past, would not hesitate to seek Soviet aid if he thought the situation serious enough.

Comment: The Arabs hold the United States partly responsible for the raids on Qibya and Nahhalin because of American financial aid to Israel and the latter's use of American ammunition.

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The Arab bloc and Israel are so intent on competing for American and UN support that there is little prospect of any solution emerging from the proposed Security Council consideration of the Arab-Israeli problem.

WESTERN EUROPE

7. Belgian Social Christian Party likely to lose parliamentary majority:

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Informed sources in the three major Belgian political parties believe that the Social Christians will lose their majority in the Chamber of Representatives and possibly in the Senate when national elections are held on 11 April.

The establishment of independent electoral lists by several splinter groups will hurt the Social Christians, who are expected to lose between 8 and 14 seats in the Chamber, mostly to Socialists and Liberals. The Communists are also expected to lose ground.

Comment: Of the 212 seats in the Chamber, the Social Christians now hold 108, the Socialists 77, and the Liberals 20. Only 7 seats are held by Communists.

The most likely successor government will be a Social Christian-Socialist coalition committed to moderate reforms. Such a coalition would mean little change in foreign policy. It would, however, command more support for its policies than the present one-party government, which has been dominated by conservatives.